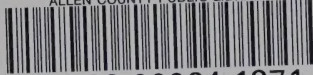


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PRELIMINARY NOTES ON THE  
IROQUOIAN FAMILY

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VOLUME I

JULY 1937

NUMBER 1

*Prehistory Research Series*

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# PRELIMINARY NOTES ON THE IROQUOIAN FAMILY

*By*

PAUL WEER

INDIANA COLLECTION

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## PRELIMINARY NOTES ON THE IROQUOIAN FAMILY

From September 5, 1534, to May 19, 1535, two North American Huron Indians were the guests of Francis I, King of France. On the September day in 1534 when Jacques Cartier dropped anchor in the harbor at St. Malo, returning from his first voyage of exploration in the gulf now called St. Lawrence, two male members of the Iroquoian linguistic family were his passengers. At the French court, Francis received Cartier and the Americans with great kindness. The Hurons became reasonably well adjusted to their strangely new surroundings, and even learned to speak a few French words. Much enthusiasm was kindled when it became known that the Indians were but visitors on the gulf shores when picked up by Cartier; that their home was to the westward on a mighty river emptying into the gulf, but whose waters came from far western great lakes, "very wide." There, surely, was the Northwest Passage!

Francis readily acceded to Cartier's request for permission to make a second voyage, and so great became his interest that he made a personal visit to St. Malo the following spring to inspect the equipment being gathered there. Three days before the sailing of the little fleet of three caravels, the bishop blessed the voyage and its leader at a solemn ceremony in St. Malo cathedral. On May 19, 1535, the guests of France left its shores for their native America.

Cartier spent the winter of 1535-1536 on the St. Lawrence, anchoring his ships near the present site of Quebec, and returned to France in July, 1536. He confidently expected to convoy the first French settlers to the New World the following spring. However, Francis was busily engaged in war with Charles V of Spain, and it was not until five years later, in 1541, that an attempt to colonize was made. Cartier arrived at the St. Lawrence that summer, but it was not until the following year that Roberval, the appointed governor, and his colonists arrived. This first effort to establish New France proved unsuccessful. Cartier, abandoning hope of Roberval's arrival, was starting homeward

just as the governor and his ships were entering the Gulf of the St. Lawrence! nor would he (Cartier) turn back. The following year (1543), Roberval abandoned the project and returned to France.<sup>1</sup> Nine years of effort apparently bore no fruit, but they did reveal an ethnological fact of great interest, as we shall point out later.

Shortly before the conclusion of these first recorded contacts between the newly arriving Europeans and an Iroquoian-speaking people, a much more casual meeting occurred between the Spaniards and another Iroquoian-speaking group far to the southward. De Soto, on his journey west across the southern Alleghenies in the year 1540, discovered certain Indian tribes, who have since been identified as the Cherokee, "occupying the beautiful hills and valleys of eastern Tennessee and the adjoining parts of Georgia and Carolina."<sup>2</sup> Then for a period of nearly sixty years, history is silent.

The first historically recorded English contact with Iroquoians occurred in 1608: "Following the valley of the Susquehanna to the shores of Chesapeake Bay, lived other Iroquoian tribes, the best known being those whose name is now applied to the river along which their villages once stood. Here they were met by Capt. John Smith and his party of Virginia colonists during the summer of 1608."<sup>3</sup> The following year, in New York State, "at the era of the Dutch discovery (1609), the Iroquois were found in possession of the same territories between the Hudson and the Genesee rivers, upon which they afterwards continued to reside until near the close of the eighteenth century." Meanwhile, "in 1603, Champlain, while at Tadousac [Quebec], heard of the Mohawk and their country. On July 30, 1609, he encountered

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<sup>1</sup>Kellogg, Louise Phelps, *The French Régime in Wisconsin and the Northwest* (Madison, 1925), pp. 16-22, 55.

<sup>2</sup>Bushnell, David L., Jr., *Native Cemeteries and Forms of Burial East of the Mississippi* (U. S. Bureau of American Ethnology, *Bulletin* 71, Washington, D. C., 1920), p. 90.

<sup>3</sup>Bushnell, David L., Jr., *Native Villages and Village Sites East of the Mississippi* (U. S. Bureau of American Ethnology, *Bulletin* 69, Washington, D. C., 1919), p. 56.

<sup>4</sup>Morgan, Lewis H., *League of the Ho-De'-No-Sau-Nee or Iroquois*, a new edition . . . edited by Herbert M. Lloyd (2 volumes, New York, 1901), I, 4.



on the lake to which he gave his own name a party of nearly 200 Iroquois warriors, under 3 chiefs.”<sup>5</sup>

Strangely enough, the earliest French and Spanish contacts, occurring in the same decade of the sixteenth century so very shortly after the Discovery, located Iroquoian groups at the farthest extremities of that vast territory east of the Mississippi in which all Iroquoian-speaking groups have dwelt since first known to the white race. From northern Alabama and Georgia to the shores of the Gulf of St. Lawrence, nations and tribal groups of this great linguistic family lived in the midst of alien linguistic neighbors—Algonquian, Siouan, Muskogean, and Uchean peoples. Have we here a problem of migration, of dispersion, or a limited degree of both? Common sense will suggest the latter possibility, but first let us go back and present the early historic picture.

“The Iroquoian tribes when first discovered formed three principal divisions, all in the eastern parts of the present United States and in the provinces of Ontario and Quebec. In the valley of the St. Lawrence and about Lake Simcoe southeast of Georgian bay were four allied peoples later classed as Hurons. In western New York, along the north shore of Lake Erie, and in portions of Michigan and Ohio were the Neutral nation, or rather confederacy; east of Lake Huron and south of Georgian bay were the Tionontati or Tobacco nation; south of Lake Erie the Erie confederacy; in central New York the great confederacy of the Iroquois or ‘Five Nations’ (Seneca, Cayuga, Oneida, Onondaga, and Mohawk); and southward of them the Conestoga, Susquehanna, and probably several other tribes extending down Susquehanna river to its mouth. The second group was located in eastern Virginia and North Carolina, and embraced the Nottoway of Nottoway river, Virginia; the Meherrin on Meherrin river; the Tuscarora, probably a confederacy of three tribes, on the Roanoke, Neuse, Taw, and Pamlico rivers; and probably the Coree or Coranine about Cape Lookout. The third group consisted of the one great tribe known as Cherokee centering in the southern

<sup>5</sup>Hodge, Frederick Webb (ed.), *Handbook of American Indians North of Mexico* (U. S. Bureau of American Ethnology, *Bulletin* 30, 2 volumes, Washington, D. C., 1907, 1910), I, 922.

Appalachians and occupying portions of the present states of Virginia, North and South Carolina, Tennessee, and perhaps Kentucky, in later times northern Georgia and northern Alabama also.”<sup>6</sup>

Our notes concerning the Iroquoian family are based upon the same method of procedure that characterized our study of the Siouans.<sup>7</sup> In that work we carefully outlined our central idea, and the method involved in carrying it forward. Without going into the details of that process here, we wish to resuggest these thoughts: “Through the progress of the years facts have a strange way of reassorting themselves. It is conceivable that, in the light of present knowledge and viewed from the advantage of an unbiased arrangement of material, hitherto unsuspected relationships of facts can be woven into a visible pattern—not the completed, cut-to-measure cloth but a basic design which of and in itself will suggest new clues for tracing out, in the words of Strong,<sup>8</sup> ‘threads that give most promise of untangling the complex skein of prehistory’ ”; <sup>9</sup> and furthermore that “this has been done in the desire to make so clearly visible and objective our present knowledge that obvious inaccuracies may be corrected, possibly a more firm basis established for the things we do know, and a clearer directive purpose given toward the things we wish to know.”<sup>10</sup>

As with our Siouan material, we realize that here also there may be much of peculiar interest to the Iroquoian family that has not been gathered from the vast amount of anthropological literature on the subject. In such an event we sincerely hope this work will have power to bring it forth in so far as it has corrective and directive value, because we are extremely interested in stimulating new research which may lead to the unfolding of a greater knowledge as the property of all.

<sup>6</sup>Swanton, John, and Dixon, Roland B., “Primitive American History,” in *American Anthropologist*, N. S. XVI, 389 (July-September, 1914).

<sup>7</sup>Weer, Paul, *Preliminary Notes on the Siouan Family*, reprinted from *Indiana History Bulletin*, XIV, No. 2 (February, 1937).

<sup>8</sup>Strong, William Duncan, *An Introduction to Nebraska Archeology* (*Smithsonian Miscellaneous Collections*, XCIII, No. 10, Washington, D. C., 1935), p. 296.

<sup>9</sup>Weer, *op. cit.*, pp. 103-4.

<sup>10</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 104.



However, the major portions of such omissions rest in the fact that much which may ultimately prove Iroquoian is, in the present state of knowledge, still a part of the untangled anthropological findings grouped under so-called culture patterns. Such culture patterns should not and we trust will not be ends in themselves, for obviously they represent but a partial approach to the problem of a larger knowledge concerning prehistoric man in America. For example, a "Fort Ancient culture" has been differentiated from a vast amount of archaeological findings; and its manifestations have been observed in a rather restricted territory in central and southern Ohio, running westward just beyond the Ohio-Indiana line, eastward to the Kanawha and south into northeastern Kentucky. This culture has been classified as an aspect of the Upper Mississippi phase under the general classification pattern called Mississippi,<sup>11</sup> which means that Fort Ancient affinities should be found in other aspects of the Upper Mississippi phase of the Mississippi pattern. It is highly improbable that archaeology alone will be able to determine whether these anticipated relationships will ultimately prove to be genetic (tribal and linguistic) or diffusional. This is precisely our point in its general application. While much has been gained, that much cannot be an end in itself, for, again referring to our example, in this case we still have the unknown, unrelated Fort Ancient people or peoples without anything to tie to.

Despite the conclusions of certain modern economists who are trying to reason away the inevitableness of cause and effect, that ancient law is universal. The only advantage in dealing with a past fact, either historic or prehistoric, lies in the possibility of tracing it in both directions—forward as a cause, backward from its manifestation as an effect. This makes possible the writing of prescriptorial history, for a prehistorical fact is a static, a frozen fact that can be held in suspense until other facts give it interpretative value. Our present problem, unfortunately, does not have "facts," in the strict sense of the term, to deal with. As before, we have recognized this condition and have divided our

<sup>11</sup>McKern, W. C., "Certain Culture Classification Problems in Middle Western Archaeology" (National Research Council, Circular Series, No. 17, May 1934).

material into three groups: Facts, Conjectures, and Traditions. Facts and conjectures have been subdivided four ways: archaeological, ethnological, historical, and linguistic. This leads to the same end, for what we are doing is realizing that a conjecture or a tradition may or may not ultimately be established as a fact.

The thought that in the Ohio Valley more cultural manifestations have been set up than there are known groups to account for them should not be disturbing. Such a situation in all probability represents as yet undifferentiated time sequences. We know of nothing in either modern or ancient history that precludes the possibility of two or more cultures being the product of a single linguistic group. In the vast territory throughout which Iroquoian-speaking tribes were scattered when first known to the whites we now know there dwelt portions of other linguistic families—Uchean, Muskogean, Siouan, and Algonquian. With the exception of the Cherokee, the Iroquoian groups at that time were in contact with but two of these alien linguistic families—the Siouan and the Algonquian. Again excluding the Cherokee, Iroquoian contacts with the Algonquians occurred in Michigan, Ontario, Quebec, western New England, New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Maryland, and Virginia; with the Siouans, in Virginia and North Carolina. Quite to the contrary were the contacts of the Cherokee. They were “surrounded by Algonquian tribes on the N., Siouan on the E., and Muskogean and Uchean tribes on the S. and W.”<sup>12</sup>

Before 1750 only the Five (then Six) Nations in New York and the Cherokee in the South remained in their original historic habitats. The years 1648 to 1651 witnessed the destruction of the Hurons, the Neutrals, and the Tionontati by the guns of the Iroquois, their remnants forming with certain Algonquian remnants the historic Wyandot. In 1656 the Five Nations destroyed the Erie, who were reduced to a few wandering bands. The Conestoga and what remained of the other Susquehanna tribes were destroyed by the Five Nations and the Virginia and Maryland colonists in 1675. The Tuscarora, together with remnants of the Meherrin and Nottoway, taking with them similar groups

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<sup>12</sup>Hodge (ed.), *Handbook of American Indians*, I, 616.



of the Siouan—Tutelo and Saponi—tribes, left Fort Christian, Virginia, in 1712, and journeyed slowly northward through the Susquehanna Valley until they finally reached the Five Nations, by whom they were adopted!<sup>13</sup> And so by the guns of the white men in the hands of their New York brothers were most of the Iroquoians destroyed, all save the Cherokee far to the south.

How long before 1540 the Iroquois and the Cherokee left the parent group and went their respective ways into totally different environments we do not know, but this much we do know—although related linguistically, “they show few other cultural resemblances.”<sup>14</sup> Furthermore, “basing conclusions on the archeological evidence, Cherokee material culture, for some generations at least before the coming of the whites, must have been very similar indeed to that of most of the tribes of the Middle Mississippi Valley district, particularly those of eastern Kentucky and parts of Ohio. It shows, however, a strong influence from the Southern Appalachian region, especially in ceramics, which naturally made itself felt mostly in the Cherokee towns situated east of the mountains; and it possessed some features in common with the Iroquois, such as the forms of arrowheads and axes.”<sup>15</sup> The material culture of the New York Iroquois is so well known that it is not our purpose to discuss it in detail here. The labors of Parker,<sup>16</sup> Morgan,<sup>17</sup> Ritchie,<sup>18</sup> Skinner,<sup>19</sup> Harrington,<sup>20</sup> Hough-

<sup>13</sup>Various dates have been given for the adoption of the Tuscarora into the league. Morgan in his *League of the Ho-De'-No-Sau-Nee or Iroquois*, I, 93, uses the date 1715. Kaj Birket-Smith, in “Folk Wanderings and Culture Drifts in Northern North America,” in *Journal de la Société des Américanistes*, N. S. XII (Paris, 1930), p. 2, uses the date 1726. The *Handbook of American Indians* gives dates from 1712-1715 to 1726 (I, 615; II, 846, 847).

<sup>14</sup>Swanton, John R., “Aboriginal Culture of the Southeast,” in U. S. Bureau of American Ethnology, *Annual Report*, 1924-1925 (Washington, D. C., 1928), p. 712.

<sup>15</sup>Harrington, Mark R., *Cherokee and Earlier Remains on Upper Tennessee River* (*Indian Notes and Monographs*, Museum of the American Indian, Heye Foundation, New York, 1922), pp. 289-90.

<sup>16</sup>Parker, Arthur C., *The Archeological History of New York*, pt. 1 (New York State Museum, *Bulletin*, Nos. 235, 236, Albany, 1922), et al.

<sup>17</sup>*League of the Ho-De'-No-Sau-Nee or Iroquois* (1901 ed.). For a bibliography of the works of Lewis H. Morgan, see *ibid.*, II, 175-77.

<sup>18</sup>Ritchie, William A., *An Algonkin-Iroquois Contact Site on Castle Creek, Broome County, N. Y.* (Rochester Municipal Museum, *Research Records*, No. 2, Rochester, 1934), et al.

ton,<sup>21</sup> and others stand as magnificent contributions to the history of the New York Iroquois. Parker's analysis of the Iroquois culture in his *Archeological History of New York*<sup>22</sup> gives a very definite list of positive and negative traits.

Now it is not strange that the Cherokee, in a totally different habitat and surrounded by other peoples, developed a divergent material culture. This is what we should expect, but this does not exclude the possibility of finding in the two material cultures a primitive Iroquoian manifestation. New stimuli pressing in from the outside, that is changed material environments and social contacts with hitherto unknown peoples, are capable of making rapid changes in the culture pattern of any social group. In none of the historic territories of the Iroquoian tribes should we expect to find a culture identical with that to be found in any other tribal or group territory. We dare not assume that any groups separated by time and place will for very long meet their different environments in the same manner; but, with the tie of a common ancestry, and with language, traditions, social thoughts and practices springing from the same source, there must remain certain traits that will continue to be mutually common property. For example, "the Cherokee area, a region which is not particularly homogeneous in culture as it tends to borrow cultural traits from its marginal areas,"<sup>23</sup> nevertheless has certain traits in common with the Iroquois territory, as has been pointed out. The framework for establishing a primitive Iroquoian culture is already at hand in

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<sup>21</sup>Skinner, Alanson, *Notes on Iroquois Archeology* (*Indian Notes and Monographs*, Museum of the American Indian, Heye Foundation, New York, 1921).

<sup>22</sup>Harrington, Mark R., "Ancient Shell Heaps near New York City," in American Museum of Natural History, *Anthropological Papers*, III (1909), cited by Ritchie in *An Algonkin-Iroquois Contact Site on Castle Creek, Broome County, N. Y.*, p. 48n.

<sup>23</sup>Houghton, Frederick, *The Archeology of the Genesee Country* (New York State Archeological Association, *Researches and Transactions*, III, No. 2, Lewis H. Morgan Chapter, Rochester, 1922), *et al.*

<sup>24</sup>Parker, *The Archeological History of New York*, pt. 1, pp. 106-130, gives an outline of Iroquoian material culture; pp. 130-51, a comparison of the Iroquoian culture with that of surrounding tribes.

<sup>25</sup>Sterling, M. W., "The Pre-Historic Southern Indians," in Conference on Southern Pre-History . . . (National Research Council, Washington, D. C., 1932), p. 23.



McKern's classification.<sup>24</sup> Arranging the archaeological and ethnological data concerning sites, groups of sites, tribes, and confederacies under their respective classification positions then, we shall, or at least theoretically should, be able to reconstruct a primitive, basic Iroquoian culture picture. When that has been done, we can begin our search for the prehistoric home of the Iroquoian family with some hope for success.

This much is very certain: "The origin of Iroquoian material culture is a subject of pertinent interest to every student of American aboriginal culture history. No comparative study has yet been attempted, and no one has been bold enough to gather all the facts and advance a working hypothesis."<sup>25</sup> Unfortunately there are but few Iroquoian migration legends to point out the direction in which to search for the early Iroquoian habitat. As Parker says, "few are familiar with Iroquois migration myths, for the reason that they are few, and those brief and difficult to recognize as such."<sup>26</sup> To be very specific about the matter he says, quoting again, "The origin of the Iroquois was a mystery to Dr. David Boyle,<sup>27</sup> even though he lived in one Iroquoian cultural center."<sup>28</sup> The tradition believed in common by Morgan,<sup>29</sup> Hale,<sup>30</sup> and Brinton<sup>31</sup> to the effect that the early Iroquois' home was north of the St. Lawrence near Montreal, or "in the district between the lower St. Lawrence and Hudson Bay," is now quite definitely under-

<sup>24</sup>McKern, "Certain Culture Classification Problems in Middle Western Archaeology" (National Research Council, Circular Series, No. 17).

<sup>25</sup>Parker, Arthur C., "The Origin of the Iroquois as Suggested by Their Archeology," in *American Anthropologist*, N. S. XVIII, 479 (October-December, 1916).

<sup>26</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 482.

<sup>27</sup>Dr. David Boyle (1842-1911), Canadian ethnologist and for twenty-five years curator of the Archeological Museum at Toronto.

<sup>28</sup>Parker, *op. cit.*, p. 479.

<sup>29</sup>Morgan, *League of the Ho-De'-No-Sau-Nee or Iroquois*, I, 5.

<sup>30</sup>Hale, Horatio, *Indian Migrations* (Chicago, 1883), quoted in Mooney, James, "Myths of the Cherokee," in U. S. Bureau of American Ethnology, *Annual Report*, 1897-1898, pt. 1 (Washington, D. C., 1900), p. 189.

<sup>31</sup>Brinton, Daniel G., *The American Race: A Linguistic Classification and Ethnographic Description of the Native Tribes of North and South America* (New York, 1891), p. 81; relative material may be found in Chamberlain, Alexander F., "Iroquois in Northwestern Canada," in *American Anthropologist*, N. S. VI, 459 (July-September, 1904).

stood to refer to the Mohawk-Onondaga tribes who in their earlier days were bands of the Huron tribe. In this connection Parker says: "The older theory that all the Iroquois originated or had their early home along the St. Lawrence about Montreal is not entirely without serious flaws. I believe from archeological evidence that certain Iroquoian tribes never came from the St. Lawrence region, for example the Seneca."<sup>32</sup>

Of the southeastern tribes, there are no traditions concerning the Nottoway and Meherrin, but the Tuscarora, by tradition, have always claimed a close relationship with the Five Nations to whom they eventually returned and by whom they were invited to become the sixth nation of the league. "The Meherrin . . . were officially reported to be a band of the Conestoga driven S. by the Virginians during Bacon's rebellion in 1675-76."<sup>33</sup> The Cherokee provide the largest Iroquoian assembly of migration legends, all of which point northward from their historic seats to the upper Ohio Valley.<sup>34</sup> Tradition "points to an entrance into the southern Appalachians via the upper Holston and New rivers, in other words down the great war trail, the Warriors' Path; and this, extended backward, would carry us along the Kanawha to the upper Ohio."<sup>35</sup>

The consolidation of present knowledge concerning the pre-history of the Iroquoian tribes appears to bring them together somewhere in the upper Ohio Valley, and from there carries them back to the Mississippi River. Swanton says: "Students of the Iroquois proper regard them as intruders from the west and probably from the southwest,"<sup>36</sup> and again, "we find Iroquoian threads leading to a point near the upper Ohio, and those of the Caddoans pointing eastward. May they be traced to a junction point?"<sup>37</sup> It is generally recognized that characteristic within the Iroquoian

<sup>32</sup>Parker, *op. cit.*, p. 483.

<sup>33</sup>Hodge (ed.), *Handbook of American Indians*, I, 336.

<sup>34</sup>Haywood, John, *The Natural and Aboriginal History of Tennessee, up to the First Settlements Therein by the White People, in the Year 1768* (Nashville, 1823), p. 231ff.

<sup>35</sup>Swanton, John R., "The Relation of the Southeast to General Culture Problems of American Pre-History," in Conference on Southern Pre-History . . . (National Research Council, Washington, D. C., 1932), p. 65.

<sup>36</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>37</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 71.



culture are influences which must certainly have southern roots. In this connection we read from Wedel's recent publication that the old Caddoan habitat on the lower Mississippi and adjacent western territories "sprang from the same basic subpattern as did the Iroquoian, Muskogean, and related cultures of the Eastern Woodland. As Sapir has suggested on linguistic grounds, the early connections appear to have been especially close between Pawnee and Iroquoian peoples."<sup>38</sup> Here it is sufficient to note that competent observers have found threads of relationship between the Iroquoian and southwestern groups, for, as indicated in our *Siouan Notes*, it is not our function to make a critical survey of our material. This also applies to the interesting question of whence came the allegedly southern cane blowgun, although it is not amiss to recall Wissler's words: "A case of some theoretical interest is the blowgun, found among the forest Indians of eastern South America, in the Antilles, and even in eastern United States, the Iroquois of New York being the most northern point of its distribution. The somewhat analogous distribution of this weapon in Asia gives us one of the most probable cases of independent invention."<sup>39</sup>

Parker tells us that "so many of the Iroquois (confederated) myths point to the southwest country that we must pause to consider just why they have been handed down."<sup>40</sup> The probability of finding a common homeland much nearer to their historic habitats does not, however, appear to be outside the realm of possibility. "There are certain Iroquoian traditions that seem to have good foundation, relating that at a certain period all the Iroquois were one people, living together and speaking the same tongue. Indeed so positive were the Iroquois of this that they could point out a certain woman and say that she represented the lineal descendant of the first Iroquoian family. Yet the confederate Iroquois knew that she did not belong in the five tribes. She

<sup>38</sup>Wedel, Waldo Rudolph, *An Introduction to Pawnee Archeology* (U. S. Bureau of American Ethnology, *Bulletin* 112, Washington, D. C., 1936), p. 102.

<sup>39</sup>Wissler, Clark, *The American Indian. An Introduction to the Anthropology of the New World* (New York, 1917), p. 132.

<sup>40</sup>Parker, "The Origin of the Iroquois as Suggested by Their Archeology," in *American Anthropologist*, N. S. XVIII, 482.

was a Neuter woman."<sup>41</sup> From the accumulated evidence it is not unreasonable to look for this common homeland not remotely distant from, and south and west of Lake Erie. "The natural conclusion, confirmed by early maps, is that the Iroquois family held all the country on the south shore of Lake Erie 300 years ago. It is every way probable that nearly all of Ohio was then in the possession of the Eries and their kindred."<sup>42</sup> If by "the Eries and their kindred" is meant undifferentiated Iroquoians, this statement is supported by a preponderance of evidence. To the east and contiguous to the Ohio groups were the Conestoga and kindred tribes in Pennsylvania, their language closely related to the Erie. "The Seneca and Erie divisions seem to have been as closely allied in western New York as the Onondaga and Mohawk were in northern and eastern New York."<sup>43</sup> Again, the Erie were "a populous sedentary Iroquoian tribe, inhabiting in the 17th century the territory extending S. from L. Erie probably to the Ohio r., E. to the lands of the Conestoga along the E. watershed of Allegheny r. and to those of the Seneca along the line of the W. watershed of Genesee r., and N. to those of the Neutral Nation, probably on a line running eastward from the head of Niagara r. (for the Jesuit Relation for 1640-41 says that the territory of the Erie and their allies joined that of the Neutral Nation at the end of L. Erie), and W. to the W. watershed of L. Erie and Miami r. to Ohio r. Their lands probably adjoined those of the Neutral Nation W. of L. Erie."<sup>44</sup> Whatever may be the ultimate truth, here we have the picture of Iroquoian tribes contiguous with one another from the western end of Lake Erie throughout Ohio, western Pennsylvania, solidly continuing into New York (for it is well known that the Conestoga territory joined with that of the Five Nations to their north), and running on through northern New York beyond Lake Ontario to the St. Lawrence, with the additional Canadian connection at Niagara. In this picture belong the Cherokee before their removal southward into the Appalach-

<sup>41</sup>Parker, *op. cit.*, pp. 481-82.

<sup>42</sup>Beauchamp, William M., *Earthenware of the New York Aborigines* (New York State Museum, *Bulletin*, V, No. 22, Albany, 1898), p. 83.

<sup>43</sup>Parker, *op. cit.*, p. 483.

<sup>44</sup>Hodge (ed.), *Handbook of American Indians*, I, 430.



ians. We need not be overly concerned about the historic tribal-group names in this early migratory spread, for it is highly probable that the later differentiations, which manifestly were destined to show themselves in cultural differences, had hardly more than taken root.

Let us turn westward and back to an earlier day, that we may present two theories concerning the coming of the Iroquoians into their eastern lands. Bushnell starts with the Iroquoian family still west of the Mississippi River "with the Caddoan adjoining them to the westward. The reasons for so placing the Iroquoian group may be briefly stated: First, the languages of the Iroquois and Pawnee (Caddoan) show certain similarities that suggest the possibility of early contact . . . ; second, a strong resemblance between early historic Pawnee (Caddoan) archeological remains in Nebraska and those of the Iroquois in New York is indicated by the recent discoveries made by W. R. Wedel . . . ;<sup>45</sup> third, the Ozark region, extending eastward from the country occupied by Caddoan tribes when they first appeared in history, reveals evidence of a very early and extensive occupancy during a long period, preceding the coming of the Siouan peoples from the valley of the Ohio."<sup>46</sup>

"If the theory that the Iroquoian tribes formerly occupied the Ozark region and later crossed to the left [east] bank of the Mississippi is accepted, it is assumed that some traversed the western and central portions of the present State of Tennessee before pushing northward. By so doing they would have displaced the earlier inhabitants of the country, undoubtedly proto-Muskogean tribes.

"Many Muskogean migration legends refer to the coming of the people from the west, and it is possible that the removal of some of the tribes into the trans-Mississippi region was contemporaneous with the movement of the Iroquoian peoples into the same country farther north, nearer the Ohio . . . .

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<sup>45</sup>Wedel, *An Introduction to Pawnee Archeology*, p. 102.

<sup>46</sup>Bushnell, David I., Jr., *Tribal Migrations East of the Mississippi . . .* (*Smithsonian Miscellaneous Collections*, LXXXIX, No. 12, Washington, D. C., 1934), p. 5.

"Fortified camp or village sites have been traced northward from central Tennessee and Kentucky and across the Ohio in the eastern counties of Indiana to the northern part of the State, thence eastward through the ancient home of the Eries to the historic sites of the Iroquois. The embankments differ in form and style of construction, a condition influenced by the nature of the locality in which they occur.

"Many of the protected sites may have been constructed and occupied by the Iroquoian tribes during the movement northward, and consequently a comparative study of the archeological material recovered from them should prove to be of the greatest interest. If this hypothesis is correct, it is probable that before the Iroquoian tribes had reached the left [south] bank of the Ohio the Siouan peoples were living in security in the upper valley of the stream."<sup>47</sup>

"Where the Iroquoian tribes may have crossed the Ohio is not known; however, if the line of fortified camps, already mentioned, prove to have been associated with the movement of the tribes, the approximate locality of their crossing will be suggested. But it is not within reason to suppose that all reached the right [north] bank of the Ohio at the same time or at the same place, and some may have followed up the valley of the stream from its mouth.

"The Cherokee were at that time a part of the Iroquoian group and as such would have participated in the movement from west of the Mississippi; however, they may have continued eastward to the mountains without having crossed the Ohio, thus approaching the country where they were first encountered by Europeans."<sup>48</sup>

The foregoing, published in 1934, represents the summation of our present archaeological-ethnological knowledge concerning the prehistoric movement of the Iroquoian groups toward their historic habitats as interpreted by Bushnell. How little progress has been made during the last two decades may be gathered from a resumé of what Parker had to say on the same subject in 1916.

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<sup>47</sup>Bushnell, *Tribal Migrations East of the Mississippi*, p. 6.

<sup>48</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 8.

Prefacing his remarks with this carefully worded caution, "For the sake of a working hypothesis and for the benefit of future discussion," he says that two or more early Huron-Iroquois tribes may have dwelt within a circle whose two-hundred-mile radius centered near the mouth of the Ohio River. There they may have been "in contact with the Caddo, the Muskogee, the Sioux and some of the Algonkian." In this habitat they were an agricultural, sedentary people, acquainted with village life. "The main body migrated in a northeasterly direction. The tribes of the Cherokee were the first to lead the way and crowded upon the mound-building Indians of Ohio, whom they fought for a long period of time. They finally overcame the Mound Builders and absorbed a large number into their tribal divisions, and possessed themselves of the Mound Builders' country." Parker is careful to say that he uses the word "Mound Builders" as a term of convenience, having no knowledge of their ethnic connections. He goes on to say that the Cherokee "took upon themselves some of the characteristics of the Mound Builders, but endeavored to blot out some of their arts, to the extent of mutilating objects they regarded as symbolic of their former enemies."<sup>49</sup>

Parker carries the Iroquoians on still farther than does Bushnell, for he says: "It would seem that the early band of Iroquois had divided at the Detroit or the Niagara river, one passing over and coursing the northern shores and the other continuing on the southern shores of Erie and Ontario. It would seem that the northern branch became the Huron and Mohawk-Onondaga; that those who coursed south of these lakes became the Seneca-Erie, the Conestoga (Andaste) and the Susquehannock. It also appears that the Cherokee and Tuscarora separated earlier than the Senecan and Huron-Mohawk divisions."<sup>50</sup> Note that Parker suggests entrance into Canada either at Detroit or Niagara. Concerning the former we read: "The route of the migration of these [Iroquoian] nations at least seems to have been eastward from the head of Lake Erie, one band crossing the Detroit river and following the northern shore of Lake Erie, the other follow-

<sup>49</sup>Parker, "The Origin of the Iroquois as Suggested by Their Archeology," in *American Anthropologist*, N. S. XVIII, 503.

<sup>50</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 483.



ing the southern shore.”<sup>51</sup> On the other hand Ritchie says: “It appears that the Huron-Neutral group preceded by several centuries the main body of Iroquoian people in their probable migration up the Ohio valley . . . . The early undifferentiated Huron-Neutral . . . . spread far and wide over Western New York and then seem to have been gradually expelled northward into southern Ontario by the pressure of their incoming kinsfolk, the ancestors of the Erie and Five Nations . . . probably early in the fourteenth century.”<sup>52</sup>

Of this much we can now be reasonably certain: Into the upper Ohio Valley came the undifferentiated Iroquoian groups; if not the entire family, certainly a major portion of it. If the assumption that the Iroquoians once spread over practically all of Ohio is ultimately proved true, it is of very great importance in reference to the Ohio Valley cultures. Little attention has been given to these people as an ethnic group by the earlier workers in Ohio;<sup>53</sup> in fact, nothing more than the realization that Iroquoian groups must have been prehistoric dwellers in the northeastern portion of that state. No recognition at all has been paid the probability of a long Siouan occupancy on the Ohio. The so-called primitive Algonquian by general consent has been accepted as the “prototype of its [Ohio’s] primitive culture groups.”<sup>54</sup> This same thought has carried on eastward to the end that everything in the East and Northeast, supposed to be old, is called Algonquian. It may be! but we challenge the concept to this extent—as the background to an archaeologically conceived, primitive Algonquian culture, let a carefully worked out ethnological pattern be developed. Any conclusions for the Ohio Valley that ignore the Siouans and the Iroquoians must be subjected to renewed study. In New York State an early influence observed as having come

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<sup>51</sup>Houghton, Frederick, “Are There Evidences of an Iroquoian Migration West of Lake Erie?” in *American Anthropologist*, N. S. XXII, 297 (July-September, 1920).

<sup>52</sup>Ritchie, William A., *Early Huron-Neutral Sand Knoll Sites in Western New York* (New York State Archeological Association, *Researches and Transactions*, Lewis H. Morgan Chapter, Rochester, 1930), p. 62.

<sup>53</sup>Shetrone, Henry C., “The Culture Problem in Ohio Archaeology,” in *American Anthropologist*, N. S. XXII, 163 (April-June, 1920).

<sup>54</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 169.

from the near south or southeast may be Siouan. We do not presume to say it is Siouan, but a carefully adjusted ethnological picture may throw light on the subject.

We will make this more plain. Taking heart from the precedents established by Bushnell and Parker, we do not hesitate for a moment to suggest certain thoughts that have come to us during this work and that on the Siouans; nor can we make a better beginning than by prefacing our remarks with Parker's own words, "For the sake of a working hypothesis and for the benefit of future discussion."

When the undifferentiated Iroquoian peoples came into the Ohio Valley they found the upper reaches of that fine country possessed by Siouan tribes. How far spread the Siouan territory at that time, we do not know; but in the course of time they were driven out of their old homes, some crossing the mountains south-eastward into Virginia and the Carolinas, but the majority traveling westward down the Ohio River. This contact and ensuing conflict, no matter what the length of its duration, must of necessity have left an influence on the social thoughts and practices of both the Iroquoians and the Siouans. As the conquerors spread out over their new lands, eventually embracing substantial portions of Ohio, Pennsylvania, New York, Ontario, and Quebec, remnants of the vanquished remained here and there, adding to the new environment additional stimuli to cultural modifications. The northeastward penetration of the Iroquoians extended to the shores of the Gulf of St. Lawrence. We can say this for the single reason that Cartier in 1534 found Indians at our present Quebec and eastward who spoke the Iroquoian language. Fortunately he collected a small vocabulary. Sixty years later Champlain found only Algonquian-speaking tribes on the lower St. Lawrence.<sup>55</sup> What a long distance, from the gulf westward to Georgian Bay!

Without Cartier's aid we could not explain the Mohawk-Onondagan tradition of an earlier home to the north. The logical conclusion would be that the legend was untrustworthy, and that surely the eastern New York Iroquois entered their historic habitats from the west. Parker's recognition of a pronounced

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<sup>55</sup>Kellogg, *The French Régime in Wisconsin and the Northwest*, pp. 55-56.

difference between Mohawk-Onondagan and Senecan archaeology and linguistics, and his realization of a sharp line of distinction between everything that pertained to the two groups would have been denied their substantial ethnological bases of fact.<sup>56</sup>

If there is any one thing we know about the Hurons it is that they were always on friendly terms with their Algonquian neighbors. The suggestion that they were driven west by their Algonquian friends does not appear reasonable, nor do alleged wars with the Iroquois offer sufficient grounds for such a lengthy evacuation. Nor is it likely that such wars were enough to account for the retirement of the eastern Iroquois from western New England, the creation of a no man's land along and around Lake Champlain, and the formation of the league, all of which occurred about the same time, between 1500 and 1600. Nor can we account for the breaking asunder of Iroquoian territorial solidarity except we discover a situation that profoundly affected the entire Iroquoian race.

A conjecture that appears to have some basis of fact<sup>57</sup> presents the picture of the Algonquians as late-comers into the United States from the northwest. Dividing somewhere in the region northwest of Lake Superior, one group traveled eastward north of the Great Lakes, while the other turned southeast and gradually worked its way into the Mississippi Valley. Some of the northern group filtered into Michigan and Wisconsin through the Straits of Mackinac, the rest going onward into the East, and representing in eastern Canada, northern New York, and upper New England those groups whose archaeological remains show certain hyperborean traits. It was with this branch of the Algon-

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<sup>56</sup>Parker, "The Origin of the Iroquois as Suggested by Their Archeology," in *American Anthropologist*, N. S. XVIII, 483.

<sup>57</sup>Birket-Smith, "Folk Wanderings and Culture Drifts in Northern North America," in *Journal de la Société des Américanistes*, N. S. XII; Birket-Smith, Kaj, *Geographic Study of the Early History of the Algonquian Indians* (Leiden, 1918); Swanton, "Aboriginal Culture of the Southeast," in U. S. Bureau of American Ethnology, *Annual Report*, 1924-1925, pp. 712, 713, 677 ff.; Speck, Frank G., "Culture Problems in Northeastern North America," in *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* . . . , LXV, No. 4, 272-311 (Philadelphia, 1926).



quian family that the Hurons were always in contact, both in the East and in the West. The group which turned southward advanced more slowly, and reached the Ohio Valley long after its northern kinsmen were domiciled in Michigan, possibly Wisconsin, in eastern Canada, northeastern New York, and in New England.

Portions of the southern group finally challenged the Iroquoian tribes in the upper Ohio Valley. After a long struggle, possibly lasting many years, the Erie (we will use the historic names for convenience) were driven north and east up against Lake Erie, while the Cherokee fled southward. Crushing on through into the East the Conestoga were driven south to Chesapeake Bay, and the frightened Tuscarora journeyed into the Siouan country in North Carolina. Reaching the coast, certain of the Algonquians turned south, later to become the Powhatan and kindred tribes. Others turned northward—the Munsee, Mohegan, and southern New England groups. Then in New England, after a separation of possibly several hundred years, the long-divided groups came together (there was possibly an earlier conjunction of the northern and southern groups in Michigan); and it was this scissors-like pressure coming from the east, the joining of the old Algonquian with the new eastern groups that brought pressure to bear on the Hurons and the Five Nations. The Hurons, in confusion, retired to the west; the Iroquois withdrew from New England and, west of Lake Champlain, formed their league of defense.

In the middle of the seventeenth century, western Pennsylvania was as much a part of no man's land as its far-famed neighbor the Ohio-Indiana-Kentucky territory. This was not the result of the famous Iroquois raids, for it was well within the historic period when, with white men's guns, they struggled hopelessly with and against both the whites and the Indians to re-establish the former status; rather was no man's land created by late Algonquian groups crushing eastward through the homelands of Iroquoian tribes, and making of that linguistic family a dispersed, a separated people.

It is not necessary for anyone to accept this theory, either in whole or in part. On grounds that are certainly not beyond the

realm of possibility we have set it up as a hypothesis. On earlier pages we have suggested a method for testing this and other hypotheses pertinent to the prehistoric problem before us. When and as a primitive material culture shall be superimposed upon a carefully constructed historical-ethnological background, prehistory will gradually become history, in the sense that it will portray an authentic picture of the ebb and flow of the social forces upon which our historical cultures stand.

Standing at the road's end of our present understanding of these matters, certain ideas suggest immediate possibilities for the advancement of the general fund of knowledge concerning the prehistoric Iroquoian family and its relationships to neighboring alien linguistic groups. Allow us to resuggest and emphasize the effort to work out an early, or earlier, primitive Iroquoian material culture pattern. To know what to look for will be a vast stride forward. This is a problem of considerable magnitude, but its rewards will be correspondingly great. The technique necessary for building this pattern will probably require a great amount of experimental work but will make less difficult the creations of such patterns for other linguistic families.

This thought is intimately related to a similar suggestion that a proto-Iroquoian language be reconstructed. The great technical advances made by our present linguistic leaders place this difficult attainment well within the realm of possibility. This will begin to give us a picture of how long ago, relatively speaking, the family unity was disrupted, and where and by whom the old parental tradition was retained most purely. Also important is the discovery of which dialect is the most divergent. Of great importance, too, is the effort to determine through linguistic interchanges and borrowings what tribe or tribes of the Iroquoian stock exerted the most influence on their Algonquian neighbors: or, by the same token, was a more powerful Algonquian linguistic influence exerted on Iroquoian groups? This initial knowledge would logically provide the means for carrying the same question forward into the realm of material culture influences. Here we could begin to discern more fully the degree of differentiation between the Cherokee and the Five Nations.

This leads naturally and logically to the next thought, that attention should be directed to the ethnographical differentiation between the two above mentioned groups. Here we have the two Iroquoian divisions that continued far into the historic period. Their roots were firmly planted in their respective historical habitats for at least a reasonably long period of protohistorical and prehistorical habitation. This suggests the possibility of weaving vivid patterns of their respective habits, customs, and cultural modes, thereby offering a striking picture of resemblances and differences which might suggest or confirm time relationships arrived at by other methods of anthropological approach.

Related to all these suggested problems is the intriguing query as to the method for discovering indications of internal factors that may or may not have made the Iroquoian linguistic dialects differentiate more quickly than was the case within the various groups of their Algonquian neighbors. This suggestion bears large possibilities for contribution to the difficult questions raised as to time sequences involved in certain marked changes apparent in the relationships of these two families in their contacts in northeastern United States.

These same problems present themselves to the archaeologist; but most fortunately it appears that they may be grouped together in one inclusive suggestion. Working backward from historical archaeological finds, where and when does undifferentiated Iroquoian material culture first begin to challenge the worker's attention? For example, when and where does Senecan archaeological material fade back into another, and dare we say, an as yet undifferentiated material culture? Was that an Erie manifestation? Did Seneca carry back still farther, through Erie, toward an earlier and as yet still more undifferentiated setup, to a people of whose material culture we know something, but whose linguistic and genetic relationships are unknown?

And again, the Iroquois (Five Nations) culture picture, archaeologically, ethnologically, ethnographically, and linguistically, is well known, but how far can it be carried backward? Where does it lose its identity? May we suggest the problem of searching for an analogy between this well-known late Iroquoian general culture and the equally well-known archaeological material culture



known by the name of Fort Ancient? A similar and equally important problem is that of tracing the relationships and dissimilarities between Cherokee and Fort Ancient. This brings back squarely the suggestion made on an earlier page concerning the resemblances and differences between Cherokee and Iroquois (Five Nations) cultures.

In these matters, we must never lose sight of the fact that the Iroquoians did not, and could not, live wholly unto themselves. Life is not that easy.

















